

NEW ORLEANS, LA.

TIMES-PICAYUNE

AUG 30 1971

M - 196,345

S - 308,949

Work of CIA Should Remain Secret

Twenty-four years ago the national legislature created the super-secret Central Intelligence Agency and now there is quite a show of feeling the result was too good from the standpoint of secrecy.

That Congress doesn't know what goes on within the CIA does more than pique curiosity, such as when it finds out about the United States' participation in a Laotian war. It makes many legislators downright put out.

Not that there hasn't been congressional prying before now, but the interest is accentuated. Of almost 200 bills introduced in Congress on the subject, as many as two survived long enough to come to a vote. None has passed.

The CIA oversight subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee, it seems, is as hush-hush about the CIA as the CIA itself, which stirs still more consternation on the Hill.

Congress knew when it created the CIA in 1947 that it was setting up no goldfish-bowl agency, so despite criticism about the CIA and its clandestine work it is difficult not to agree with Sen. John C. Stennis, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee and on its oversight committee, when he says:

"If we are going to have a CIA, and we have to have a CIA, we cannot run it as a quilting society or something like that."

It is easy to hop on the CIA, for the agency cannot answer its critics. That is the nature of its operations.

The charter of the CIA, the National Security Act of 1947, was the culmination of a national resolve that one Pearl Harbor was enough. President Truman said in that year in referring to the Pearl Harbor period, "the military did not know everything the State department knew, and the diplomats did not have access to all the Army and Navy knew. The Army and Navy, in fact, had only a very informal arrangement to keep each other informed as to their plans."

So the idea behind the CIA was to coordinate the intelligence elements of the government. Not a law unto itself, it is answerable to those it serves in government.

For the agency to make Congress privy to its secrets would be to have no secret at all, hence no usable foreign intelligence.